

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 TRSE-00 /058 W

-----261902Z 060365 /50

R 261826Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8606

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 09061

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: KOHL ON FRG DOMESTIC POLITICS

REF: BONN 8774

SUMMARY: CDU LEADER HELMUT KOHL HAS TOLD ME THAT HE WILL INCREASINGLY LOOK FOR PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES ON ISSUES WHICH MIGHT DIVIDE THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS FROM THE FREE DEMOCRATS. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE WOULD BEGIN TO ATTACK THE FREE DEMOCRATS INCISIVELY IN THE FUTURE IF THEY DO NOT SWITCH COALITION PARTNERS. HE DISMISSED RECENT CDU CRITICISM OF HIS LEADERSHIP AND AGAIN REJECTED THE NOTION OF A FOURTH PARTY. END SUMMARY

1. DURING MY CALL ON HIM MAY 25, OPPOSITION LEADER HELMUT KOHL SAID THE FOLLOWING THINGS:

FUTURE OPPOSITION TACTICS.

--KOHL WILL BE INCREASINGLY LOOKING FOR ISSUES

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ON WHICH THE OPPOSITION CAN EXPLOIT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SPD AND ITS FDP COALITION PARTNER. THAT IS ONE REASON THE OPPOSITION HAS CALLED FOR THE DEBATE ON INNER-GERMAN POLICY. IT HAS ALSO LED THE OPPOSITION TO INITIATE DEBATES ON SUCH ITEMS AS MEDICAL COSTS, INCREASED TAXATION, AND OTHER SOCIAL ISSUES.

--SCHMIDT'S POSITION REMAINS WEAK, AND HAS BEEN FURTHER WEAKENED BY THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT DECISION THAT HE ACTED UNCONSTITUTIONALLY IN ALLOCATING BUDGETARY RESOURCES AS FINANCE MINISTER IN 1973.

--THE OPPOSITION WILL ATTACK THE FDP MORE SHARPLY IN COMING YEARS, PARTICULARLY TOWARD THE END OF 1978 AND IN 1979, WHEN THE NEXT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IS SCHEDULED AND WHEN THE CDU WILL HAVE ITS OWN CANDIDATES (E.G. FILBINGER, VON WEIZSAECKER, AND BAVARIAN CULTURE MINISTER MAIER) IF SCHEEL AND THE FDP DO NOT ACT IN A MANNER THAT WILL LEAD THE CDU TO SUPPORT SCHEEL. MOREOVER, IF THE FDP HAS NOT LEFT THE COALITION BY 1980, KOHL WILL ATTACK GENSCHER AND HIS PARTY FOR HAVING SUBVERTED THE INTENT OF THE FRG BASIC LAW BY HELPING A MINORITY PARTY GOVERN. THIS SHOULD BE EFFECTIVE BECAUSE KOHL IS NOT KNOWN AS AN ENEMY OF THE FDP.

--IF GENSCHER WISHED TO CHANGE PARTNERS, HE COULD DO SO. THE ALLEGEDLY LEFT-LEANING PARTY BASE IS NOT SO IMPORTANT THAT IT CAN PREVENT HIM FROM DOING WHAT HE WISHES. THEREFORE, GENSCHER CANNOT USE THE ARGUMENT AGAINST A COALITION WITH THE CDU/CSU.

THE INTERNAL OPPOSITION DEBATE.

--THE DEBATE WITHIN THE OPPOSITION SHOULD NOT BE EXAGGERATED. TODENHOEFER IS ISOLATED AND INSIGNIFI-

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 09061

CANT. HE IS COMPLAINING BECAUSE KOHL REFUSED HIM A
PROSPECTIVE MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIO WHICH HE REQUESTED.

--THE CDU/CSU STRATEGY COMMISSION WILL MEET
NEXT MONTH AND WILL CONTINUE TO MEET ON OCCASION. HOW-
EVER, IT WILL NOT REALLY BECOME IMPORTANT UNTIL SERIOUS
PLANNING FOR THE 1980 CAMPAIGN HAS TO BEGIN.

--MATHEMATICALLY, THERE IS AN ARGUMENT TO BE
MADE FOR A FOURTH PARTY. THE CURRENT GERMAN ELECTORAL
SYSTEM PENALIZES THE CDU/CSU. UNDER ALMOST ANY OTHER
SYSTEM, ANY PARTY THAT HAD WON MORE THAN 48 PER CENT OF
THE VOTES WOULD HAVE HAD A MAJORITY IN THE PARLIAMENT.
A FOURTH PARTY MIGHT INCREASE THE MATHEMATICAL STRENGTH
OF THE UNION IN THE BUNDESTAG. HOWEVER, THAT IS NOT THE
ISSUE. HAVING A FOURTH PARTY ON THE RIGHT WOULD LEAD TO
A SPLINTERING OF THE SPD AND TO THE CREATION OF A NEW
FIFTH PARTY ON THE LEFT. THIS MULTIPLICATION OF POLITI-
CAL GROUPS WOULD BE TO GERMANY'S GENERAL DISADVANTAGE,
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AND KOHL THUS DOES NOT WISH TO HAVE A FOURTH PARTY.

FUTURE STATE ELECTIONS.

--THE HESSE ELECTION NEXT YEAR WILL BE
IMPORTANT. MORE IMPORTANT, PERHAPS, WILL BE LOWER
SAXONY. MANY CDU OFFICIALS WANT TO GET AN ABSOLUTE
MAJORITY IN LOWER SAXONY. KOHL WOULD PREFER TO HAVE
THE PARTY FALL ONE VOTE SHORT OF AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY
AND TO HAVE THE FDP WIN MORE VOTES THAN LAST TIME. SUCH
AN OUTCOME WOULD HAVE THE GREATEST IMPACT IN BONN.

2. COMMENT: AS USUAL, KOHL WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT HIS
CHANCES OF BECOMING CHANCELLOR ALTHOUGH UNSPECIFIC ABOUT
THE PRECISE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS THAT WOULD BRING HIM TO
OFFICE. HE ALSO, AS USUAL, STRESSED REPEATEDLY THAT
HIS PRINCIPAL CONCERN WAS NOT SIMPLY TO COME TO POWER

BUT TO DO SO IN A WAY THAT WOULD STRENGTHEN THE DEMO-
CRATIC INSTITUTIONS OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC.
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